

Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

PART III

Vernacular Chant in Your Parish Liturgies

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This presentation is available for download at

<http://vernacularchant.blogspot.com/>

I would like to acknowledge the work of Jeffrey Tucker and Arlene Oost-Zinner and their 2003 article in Sacred Music Magazine, *The Blueprint: Sacred Music in Your Parish*, which has not only provided the inspiration for this presentation, but for the re-emergence of chant and sacred music in countless parish as well.

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- **Various Statements and Speeches by Benedict XVI**
- **The New Translation of the Roman Missal (2010)**

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The rationale for seeking to improve liturgical music at the parish level exists, and has existed since the Second Vatican Council. So why has it been so difficult to do?

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SOME LIKELY OBSTACLES TO THE INTRODUCTION
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Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

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- Resistance from the Pastor and/or Priests

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- **Educate Yourself and Sing in Private**

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- Build Support for Your Project

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Vernacular Chant in the Ordinary Form

As you begin undertaking this project, and in most parishes it will be a year-long or possibly multi-year effort, it is important to set realistic goals and have a realistic vision for what you want to accomplish.

- Unless it is the desire of the Pastor and Music Director to do so, it is not realistic to expect that you will be able to replace your parish's music repertoire with a "John Cantius" style music program.
- Seek to make changes first where they will have the most impact with the least "disruption". Because of the national effort to promote the chant ordinary in the missal, that should be the first step for any such effort.

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1. Educate Yourself and Sing in Private

- Learn the technical aspects of chant reading and singing (the *chant tutorial* powerpoint is a good place to start)
- Attend training and educational events (look online for local events and opportunities)
- Begin collecting resources and study them - use your online forums to ask questions, etc..
- Sing, sing, sing...
- Listen, listen, listen...
- Repeat as needed...

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1. Educate Yourself and Sing in Private

There is no need to become a scholar or to be ready to answer every question to revive the treasury of sacred music. To begin, all one needs is the ability to sing chant with confidence enough to produce compelling versions for others, preferably by memory.

It need not be beautiful, only competent.

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1. Educate Yourself and Sing in Private

How long you take to work through this stage will depend on your personal schedule and commitment.

A good indicator that you are ready to move on would be when you feel comfortable singing an unfamiliar selection of chant in either English or Latin, and can make your way through it with few errors. You should also have a basic knowledge of the history of chant, historic periods and major developments.

Do not be in a hurry. It could be 6 months, it could be a year or more.

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1. Educate Yourself and Sing in Private

Sage Advice:

**Consider attending the
CMAA Colloquium**



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2. Form a Schola

- Identify and ask 2 or 3 others who you know may be interested to join you in this effort.
- If possible, assemble a group of 6-8 individuals **without** advertising in bulletins or parish media.
- If you do advertise, emphasize the educational and spiritual/ prayer objectives of the group

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2. Form a Schola

Sage Advice:

In some parishes, it may be better to form such a group outside of the established music ministry



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2. Form a Schola

Once you have a group together and have begun practicing, it's time to consider your **repertoire**.

- Begin with the Mass setting in the Missal.
- Communion Antiphons in English
- Marian chants and chants for special days.

Other selections can be added to your group's repertoire as time permits, but go for the most useful selections first!

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2. Form a Schola

How long you take to work through this stage will depend on a variety of factors, including how much time you are able to commit, the commitment of your Schola members, and the very unpredictable learning curve of any group of individuals.

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3. Build Support for the Project

The point of this step is to **get other people in your parish interested** and build support for quality liturgical music, address any opposition, and allow your group to be seen and heard **outside of the liturgy**.

Again, focus on the **educational** and **outreach** aspects as you work through this stage.

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3. Build Support for the Project

Sage Advice:

If you are not a member of your parish staff, seek help from someone who is as you move forward...



Catholic parishes are intensely political institutions...it would be great if it weren't so, but they are and there are “proper channels” to go through to become a “parish group”.

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3. Build Support for the Project

How long you take for this stage will again depend on your commitment and the “situation on the ground” at your parish. While it is important to understand and address opposition, it is also crucial that you approach this stage of your project with **charity** and **honesty**.

- Clear all activities with the Pastor or person responsible for ministries and activities.
- Do not be deceitful or misrepresent your activities.
- Do not denigrate other musical styles or musical groups present in your parish.

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3. Build Support for the Project

Some suggested activities:

- Create a 30-45 minute presentation on “Catholic Sacred Music” that incorporates some examples sung by your Schola and ask to present it at meetings of other active parish groups.

CCW, Parish Youth Groups, Parish School Classes.

- If possible, expand the presentation and present it as a special program (“7:00pm in the Parish Hall...)

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3. Build Support for the Project

Some suggested activities:

- Consider approaching your Diocesan Music Committee to see about presenting a section at diocesan workshop, retreat or other activity that will allow you to be seen and heard.
- Contact your local (or closest) CMAA chapter to find out about chant-related events and activities in your area. Take part as a group in as many events as possible!

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4. Sing at Your Parish Liturgies

Now it is time to approach the Director of Music and the Pastor about taking part in your parish liturgies.

- As already mentioned, be realistic about your role and seek to work within the current framework.
- Be prepared to address reasonable questions about how chant and sacred music would fit into your parish's music program.

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4. Sing at Your Parish Liturgies

There are differing opinions about where to start, but there is some consensus now that a **chanted Ordinary, such as that given in the New Missal**, is a good place to begin to introduce chant in a parish setting. Begin with the shorter texts...

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Once you have established the singing of a chanted Ordinary (or chant based setting), make use of chant settings of other parts of the liturgy where assembly participation is expected and established.

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4. Sing at Your Parish Liturgies

- Responsorial Psalms
- Communion Antiphon (this is particularly effective and practical if used in conjunction with a set of strong eucharistic hymns.)
- Universal Prayer responses (Lord, hear our prayer...)
- Entrance and Offertory Chants (Propers)

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- Adopt an “in-addition-to” position rather than an “instead-of” approach:
 - Sing a chanted Communion Antiphon *in addition to* the regular communion hymn or song rather than *instead of*.
 - Present the chanted Ordinary in the missal as *one of several settings* used by your parish rather than the only setting...
 - Suggest incorporating chanted Psalmody every so often rather than as a replacement for the current settings used.

In short, work to *integrate* chant and other sacred music into the current program rather than seeking to replace one with the other!

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- Be charitable: work within the established program at your parish and do not ever denigrate other groups or musical styles.

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SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT POINTS

- Have a realistic plan and work towards a goal.
- Allow sufficient time to achieve goals.
- Be charitable: work within the established program at your parish and do not ever denigrate other groups or musical styles.
- Work for excellence and beauty!

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